



# Capitol Report

News & Updates from Your State Capitol  
By Arkansas Secretary of State Charlie Daniels

www.sos.arkansas.gov

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## Voter Software In Place, Voting Equipment On the Way

With all 75 counties connected to the state's new voter registration system and updated voting machines on the way, Arkansas is well ahead of the curve in complying with the federal Help America Vote Act.

Around 20 states reportedly missed the January 2006 deadline for centralized voter registration systems and even more states have not yet selected new voting equipment. Arkansas, however, went online with its new voter network in December 2005, and the first phase of new voting machines is now arriving.

In fact, during its winter meeting in Washington, D.C., the National

Association of State Election Directors highlighted Arkansas among a handful of successful HAVA implementation programs.

(See VOTING EQUIPMENT Cont. on Page 2)



Touch-screen voting is one option for Arkansas voters.



*As the state's chief elections officer, I truly believe that every Arkansan should have easy access to a secure voting system. That's why it has been an honor to oversee the transformation in our state's elections process over the past three years.*

*I am most pleased that we are setting the pace for other states to follow. The special election in December posed a few challenges for installing the voter system, registering new voters and training workers, but it was worth having a warm-up for the larger turnout in May. We continue to fine-tune the software to the state's needs as county clerks become more familiar with the system, adding new voter information and preparing for the May 23 primary elections.*

*Our attention has now turned to the new voting equipment that's on its way to Arkansas. We worked very hard to present the simplest, most cost-effective options for each county's particular needs.*

(Continued on Page 2)

## Franchise Tax Forms Now in Companies' Hands

In January, businesses around Arkansas received their forms for filing annual reports and franchise tax payments by May 1.

Corporations may file their franchise taxes online 24 hours a day on the Secretary of State's website, [www.sos.arkansas.gov](http://www.sos.arkansas.gov). Online filing provides automatic calculations to eliminate math errors that often slow processing time. It also enables the customer to generate immediate e-mail confirmations and copies of each completed filing. Firms that are filing reports for multiple corporations can use XML bulk filing or smaller batch filing for convenience.

The Arkansas Secretary of State's office and the Information Network of Arkansas, which provides Arkansas.gov

services, are cooperating to waive the usual fees for online batch and bulk filing, Daniels said. "Corporations filing online may pay franchise taxes by Visa, MasterCard, Discover or electronic check," he added.

Corporations can also file by mail or in person at the BCS office, Suite 250 of the Victory Building, located at 1401 West Capitol, Little Rock.

Last year, a fee increase enacted by the legislature in 2003 affected approximately 100,000 Arkansas corporations and generated \$18.5 million, of which \$11.1 million was allocated to the Education Adequacy Fund.

For additional information, call 501-682-3409 or toll free at 888-233-0325.



501-682-1010

(Continued from front page)

*Whether your county selected electronic touch screens or optical scan ballots, I am confident that we have a reliable, accessible voting system being put into place.*

*I want to personally thank the county clerks, election commissioners, poll workers and many others for your patience and cooperation during this transition. I appreciate your assistance and dedication to seeing this process through its completion.*

*Training sessions will be held over the coming weeks for local election officials and poll workers in the 22 counties switching to new equipment in May. We want them to feel very comfortable with the touch-screen and optical scan machines so they can help voters through the new processes.*

*Alerting Arkansans to the changes they'll face will be our next mission. This spring we're launching a voter education campaign that will show voters what to expect at the polls. Change can result in uncertainty, so we want to reassure voters that these changes are for the best. New software, new equipment, new guidelines – they simply mean more communication, easier access and better security. That's good for all of Arkansas.*

VOTING EQUIPMENT (Cont. from front page)

“It’s hard to realize how far we’ve come until you see all the other states that are still struggling with these decisions,” said Arkansas Secretary of State Charlie Daniels.

### **Network of Voters in Arkansas**

Although it accelerated the pace of training and installation of the new voter registration system, the state’s special election in December was a good gauge of the software’s performance. “Anytime you make a change on this scale, you have to anticipate some hurdles, but we’ve been extremely pleased with our voter system so far,” Daniels said.

### **21st Century Voting**

The next step will bring significant changes to almost a third of Arkansas’s counties for the May elections. Twenty-two counties will make the switch from punch cards, lever machines or hand-counted paper ballots to one of two types of systems: electronic or optical scan ballots.

Other counties will have new equipment in time for the November 7 general election.

With optical scan systems, voters mark a paper ballot that is scanned into a counting machine either at the polling site or in a central location in the county. Twenty-five counties will switch to this system .

On electronic voting systems, voters touch a computer screen to mark their choices. Every polling site in the state will have at least one DRE machine accessible to voters with physical or visual disabilities, allowing them to vote completely in private for the first time. Under Arkansas law, electronic voting systems will produce a print-out that voters can use to verify their choices and will remain on file in case a recount is called. Almost two-thirds of the counties will opt for touch-screen only systems.

Both types of machines are simple to use and offer voters a very private, very secure system, ensuring that Arkansas’s votes are counted accurately.

For more information on voting in Arkansas, visit the Secretary of State’s website at [www.sos.arkansas.gov](http://www.sos.arkansas.gov).

## **Arkansas Elections Calendar**

**March 21 – Candidate Filing Period Begins at noon**

**April 4 – Candidate Filing Period Ends at noon**

**April 23 – Deadline to register to vote in the  
May Primary**

**May 23 – Preferential Primary Election**



## State Capitol Exhibit Tracks Golden Age of Arkansas Railroads

In the decades following the Civil War, railways were forged across Arkansas, crisscrossing the landscape and connecting the state to the world. Rail lines joined old towns and created new ones as they opened remote corners to development. Shortlines connected to mainlines, sending the production of Arkansas's forests, farms and mines into national markets. People followed the rails, establishing many of the communities that are familiar to us today. It was the "golden age" of railroading in Arkansas, and it is the subject of a new exhibit at the State Capitol, "Trains (Slow and Fast) Through Arkansas," on display through May 14.

Historic photographs, maps and choice artifacts from Arkansas museums and private collections evoke a time in which passengers and mail both rode the rails between towns. The exhibit looks back at the main lines that ran through Arkansas and highlights the glories of passenger trains. Other displays track innovations such as parcel express service, telegraphy and railway post offices, which revolutionized mail delivery.

The "golden age" of Arkansas railroading stretched from the 1860s through much of the 1970s. During that time, passenger rail service waxed, then waned until the railways'

domination of freight and parcel transportation was challenged by trucking and air transport. By the early 1980s passenger service was almost gone from Arkansas and old familiar names had disappeared from the roster of Arkansas's rail lines.

Memories and reminders of that golden age have not, however, disappeared. "Trains (Slow and Fast) Through Arkansas" salutes the people, clubs and institutions that keep memories of railroading past alive, while some 2,750 miles of thriving mainline and shortline railroads, some still operating over routes laid out in the 1850s, remain a vital part of Arkansas's diverse transportation system.

The exhibit was prepared by the Secretary of State's office with assistance from the Arkansas chapters of the National Railroad Historical Society, the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, the Arkansas Railroad Museum of Pine Bluff, Mammoth Spring State Park, the Fort Smith Trolley Museum and the Nevada County Depot and Museum in Prescott, with generous assistance provided by railroad historians and enthusiasts statewide.



## Civil Rights, Current Events Show Students' Voting Power

Unemployment, health care, the war on terror – these are hot-button issues that lead the daily headlines, but aren't on the minds of most teenagers. An annual workshop hosted by Secretary of State Charlie Daniels strives to open students' eyes to these topics and many others that affect their lives now and for years to come.

Held in cooperation with the National Association of Secretaries of State, Arkansas's National Young Voters program was conducted February 28-March 3 at the Association of Arkansas Counties building in Little Rock. Students from around the state participated in the annual voter education program that shows young people the value of their voice.

Interactive skits, readings and discussions gave students a first-hand look at women's suffrage, the civil rights movement and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Students participated in a lively debate on current events, toured the Arkansas State Capitol and met with visiting elected officials. They also had the chance to preview Arkansas's new touch-screen voting machine.

Over 500 students have participated in the program since Secretary Daniels began hosting it in 2003. These students have learned that their voices do count, a fact brought home by these statistics from "Rock the Vote":

- Young adults typically have 40-50 percent higher unemployment rates than older population groups;
- The cost of higher education continues to soar, preventing many students from attending college;
- Approximately 13 million 18-29 year olds do not have health insurance;
- Of the 140,000 American troops in Iraq, 80 percent are under age 35.

"My hope is that our voting education opens students' eyes to the responsibilities that they, as future voters, will encounter," said Secretary Daniels. "If they don't vote, they'll surrender their decision-making power to others who do. And they may not like the outcome."



During National Young Voters Week at the State Capitol, students discussed civic involvement with Pulaski County Clerk Pat O'Brien (left) and previewed the state's new touch-screen voting machine (right).

## Comer Named New Director of Mechanical and Electrical.



James "Jim" Comer recently joined the Secretary of State's staff as director of the Mechanical and Electrical Systems Division. He's responsible for maintaining and upgrading the engineering of the heating, cooling, electrical and plumbing service for the Capitol and Capitol Hill Building.

He previously served as Assistant Project Manager for The William J. Clinton Presidential Center. He resides in North Little Rock with his wife and their two children.

## Let Us Know!

### Need a Speaker?

The Secretary of State offers specialized programs for students, civic groups, businesses and others. To schedule a speaker for your group, call (501) 683-3702 or e-mail [speaker@sos.arkansas.gov](mailto:speaker@sos.arkansas.gov).

### Need to Update?

If you receive duplicate issues of this newsletter or need to change your address, call (501) 682-3470 or e-mail [arsos@sos.arkansas.gov](mailto:arsos@sos.arkansas.gov).



## Enjoy the Springtime Beauty of the Capitol Grounds

Spring has arrived and it's a great time to see the State Capitol. Once you've toured the inside, take time to enjoy a beautiful day walking around the collage of floral arrangements and displays on the Capitol Grounds. There will be thousands of spring-blooming annuals, perennials, shrubs and trees to see as you walk among the monuments and memorials, experiencing the beauty and history that are intricately intertwined here.

In addition to ornamental trees such as Southern Magnolia and Japanese Maple, you'll enjoy elegant tulips and other bulbs that greet the spring. As the weather warms, the blue, white and yellow shades of iris begin to emerge in a dedicated bed near the State Supreme Court Building. The stately varieties are tended by the Central Arkansas Iris Society.

Later in spring, a generous variety of roses will begin blooming on the Capitol's southwest side near the Supreme Court, and on the north lawn along Third Street. The Capitol grounds have more than 1,000 rose bushes with 51 rose varieties that include English Rose, floribundas, minatures, hybrid teas, grandifloras, shrub roses and climbers.

Some of the monuments you'll pass along the way as you admire the beauty of the spring foliage include the Monument to Confederate Soldiers on the northeast corner of the Capitol lawn dedicated in 1905, and on the southeast lawn, the Monument to Confederate Women dedicated in 1913. On the Capitol's southeast corner, you'll find the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Dedicated in 1987, the 664 names enscribed include 22 Arkansans still listed as missing in action. Just north of it is the Medal of Honor Memorial honoring Arkansas's 25 Congressional Medal of Honor recipients. It was dedicated in 2000.

Approaching the south mall lawn, you'll see the Law Enforcement Officers' Monument. Dedicated in 1994, it pays tribute to the officers who lost their lives in the line of duty. It's nestled between a row of pin oaks along the Capitol's south entrance. Planted in 1911, these are the oldest planted trees on the grounds.

On to the north mall, you'll find the newest monument dedicated on the Capitol Grounds. Entitled "Testament," this monument was dedicated in 2005 to honor the nine African-American students who integrated Little Rock's Central High School in 1957.

For more information on the State Capitol and grounds, contact the tour director at (501) 682-5080.



The early blooms of Japanese magnolias create a spectacular spring display at the State Capitol.

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## Advisory Council to Guide Business Services

Arkansas Secretary of State Charlie Daniels has formed a Business and Commercial Services Advisory Council to enhance services provided by his office to the business community.

The committee members represent a range of professions and backgrounds including attorneys, CPAs, bankers, notaries public, business and service providers, legislators, county officials and private citizens. At semi-annual meetings, the group will exchange ideas to improve communication and develop more productive relationships between the Secretary of State's office and the business community, customers and Arkansas residents. Its first meeting was held January 17.

"Each of the people appointed to this advisory board brings a different perspective," Daniels said. "By sharing the needs and strengths they see every day in their area of

experience, they will provide input that will help our Business and Commercial Services division grow to better serve all of Arkansas."

The council members are Ronnie Dedman, Bryan Duke, Janet Grard, Harry Hamlin, Terry Mercing, Biff Morgan, Phillip Quick, Mary Ellen Richards and Bob Roberts, all of Little Rock; Greg Brown of Benton; James Landers of Camden; Bill Ramsey of Fayetteville; Rep. Bruce Maloch of Magnolia; Sen. Steve Faris of Malvern; the Rev. Thurston Lamb of North Little Rock; Jimmie Don McKissack of Pine Bluff; and David James of Texarkana. The board also includes circuit clerks Karan Skarda of Prairie County, Doug Kidd of Saline County and Debbie Wise of Randolph County.

## History Students to Examine Secretary of State Archives

Since statehood, it's been the responsibility of the Secretary of State to safeguard state property, including some of its most valuable and sensitive records. The Constitution of 1874 makes explicit the office's obligation to "keep a full and accurate record of all the official acts and proceedings of the governor... with all papers, minutes and vouchers relating thereto..." The Secretary of State's records-keeping duties have grown to include trademarks and incorporations, rolls of professional certifications, election records, copies of pardons, commutations, warrants and extradition requests, as well as gubernatorial proclamations and executive orders. The office also curates the archives of the Capitol, including hundreds of architectural drawings and prints, extensive correspondence and literally thousands of photographs.

This spring, five history graduate students from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock are getting a first-hand introduction to the theory and practice of keeping and providing access to such records. Capitol Historian Dr. David Ware leads the Introduction to Archives Management class. Students are from the Master of Arts in Public History program, which prepares candidates for careers outside of the traditional academic setting.

Through research and writing assignments, these students will explore topics such as appraisal and acquisition of records; arrangement and description; reference service and facilitating access; preservation of records; advocacy and outreach; management of ongoing archives programs and, finally, ethical and legal considerations.



The core of the class, however, consists of hands-on experience. "Archives work was something traditionally learned on the job," says Ware, "and there is still no substitute for getting a real feel for the preserved historical record."

Students will examine a wide variety of materials drawn from Secretary of State collections, conducting preliminary archival processing on a mixed collection of organizational documents.

"In an ideal world, archives would be kept in an orderly way, filed in order and types of materials organized together," says Ware. "This study collection is more like what they'll find in most small historical societies or museums or corporations. They will get to make some hard choices, then write them up and submit them as an archival prescription, which is what they'll do as professionals."



3-06  


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